

### **3.8.1 Contemplating Contemplation**

Before we start our serious inquiry into Contemplation, for our own amusement let us take for granted that all things strive to achieve Contemplation to the best of their ability. Not only Reasoning animals, but also Unreasoning Animals, plants, and even the Earth in which plants grow. It is doubtful that anyone would take this proposition seriously, but we can entertain ourselves with it as a thought experiment.

Given this presupposition, in this very moment as we are playing this mind game, are we engaged in the Act of Contemplation? Yes, everyone who engages in this mind game is also engaged in Contemplation, or at least is attempting to. Further, both joking children and seriously meditating monks are attempting Contemplation via their jokes and meditative practices. Based on our premise, every Act that anyone engages in becomes an Act of striving for Contemplation. Both Acts taken of free will or done out of compulsion strive for Contemplation. We will discuss this consequence more later in this discourse.

To begin our more serious discussion, let us discuss the ramifications for plants and Earth. What is Contemplation to them? Which of Earth's Activities produces Contemplation, and in what sense? How can Nature itself, which is usually thought of as being without a Reasoning faculty or even Consciousness of any kind, Contemplate? How can Nature engage in Contemplation without possessing a faculty for it?

### **3.8.2 The Impassivity of Nature**

It should be obvious to everyone that Nature itself does not require hands, feet, or any tools external to itself. To Act, Nature only has need of a Matter or substate to Act upon, and a Form under which to subject the Matter. This is clearly not a mechanistic physical interaction. How could leverage and physical force produce the variety of colors and patterns we see in the sensible world?

The process of Nature has been compared to sculpture (e.g. of wax models). Yet even sculptors must add coloring agents, separate from the substrate being sculpted, to their works. Further, a sculptor must possess the abstract ability to produce a sculpture, and this ability is never diminished by their Act of sculpting. So too do Nature's powers remain immovable. It has no need for distinct parts that can be affected. The Matter is what is affected, while Nature itself remains unchanged and impassible. After all, Nature is the primal Mover, and the source of Movement cannot itself move. Otherwise, it would no longer be the source of Movement, but something which participates in Movement.

Objectors might say that it is the Reason for Nature (i.e. the Intellectual Principle of Nature which gets expressed) that is Unmoved. They will say that Nature is something which is different from its Reason, and that Nature is itself in Movement. Yet if we are speaking of Nature as a whole, what else could we be referring to than its Reason? What else could encapsulate all of Nature but its Intellectual Principle? Of course, all Intellectual Principles are Impassible. Thus, if Nature as a whole is one in the same as its Intellectual Principle, then Nature will be Impassible as well. Nature itself must be Ideal Form, not some variety of Formed Matter. What use could the Ideal Form of Nature have for Material features such as heat and cold?

It is the Matter itself which serves as the substrate for the expression of these Intellectual Principles. It is worth noting that Matter itself does not possess these Qualities. Rather, Matter which expresses these Qualities is Qualified Matter comprised of both Form and Matter. Matter does not possess Fire, Matter catches Fire (i.e. Matter takes on the Form of Fire).

This is evidence that for all plants and animals, it is Reason and Intellectual Principles which initiate all Acts. Further, this is evidence that Nature is itself a Reason which then serves to produce additional Reasons, imparting part of itself into all Material things while remaining unaffected and irreducible. Visible shape (i.e. of a Body) is just the final expressed Intellectual Principle. It is inanimate, and produces nothing further (i.e. it does not serve as a Reason for anything else). For an Animated Body (i.e. a Living Being), the Reason for the Body's Animation is a sibling to the Reason for the Body's generation, but one Reason merely produces a Body, while the other Reason Animates it into Life.

### **3.8.3 The Contemplative Generation of Nature and Reason**

How does Nature generate things, and by what means does it arrive at Contemplation? Nature remains impassible and undiminished as it generates. Since Nature is a Reason, and since a Reason is a Contemplation, it follows that Nature is a Contemplation as well. What other source of generation could remain completely self-contained and lose nothing to the thing that it generates?

Every Act happens for a Reason. Thus, each Act and its Reason are distinct. Reason produces and presides over Act, so it cannot be the Act itself. Reason is a Contemplation, not an Act. Reason when considered in its totality consists in Contemplation from the first Reason to the last. The final Reason before an Act is also Contemplation, but merely in the sense that it is Contemplated by a Soul. Reason in totality, however, can be viewed from the perspective of both Soul and Nature. We will begin with the viewpoint of Nature.

Do Reason, and consequently Nature itself, derive from Contemplation alone? Since Contemplations are derived from prior Contemplations, and since Reason is itself a Contemplation, then it follows that Reason and Nature derive purely from Contemplation. How could Reason have its source in a Contemplation? Put another way, what is the source of Contemplation? After all, the Act of Contemplation requires both a thing engaging in Contemplation and a thing being Contemplated. Since we are speaking of the ontologically seminal Reason, and since it must be a Contemplation, the only possibility is a sort of self-contained Contemplation. Put another way, it must be a Contemplation by and of the thing engaging in Contemplation. Put yet another way, it must be a variety of self-Contemplation.

How does Reason Contemplate itself? Reason or Nature itself does not possess a faculty of discursive Reason (i.e. it does not consider possibilities and discursively parse through them). Objectors may ask how the source of Life, Reason, and Generation could lack a faculty of Reason. Yet for Nature to contain a faculty for Reasoning, it would need to lack some information that it would be using its Reasoning faculty to derive. Yet Nature lacks nothing. It does not produce things discursively, it produces things which it already possesses from its inception.

This manner of production is precisely within Nature's Essence, as this is its characteristic Act. Reason's Essence is to simultaneously be the act and subject of Contemplation. This combination also makes Nature a Reason for many things. An Account of Nature is incomplete without each of these components. Thus, for Nature, the Act of Generation is a variety of Contemplation. The generation of all things is thus the product of a Contemplation, and this is why Nature is never diminished. Generation is simply the self-contained Contemplation of Nature.

### **3.8.4 Nature from Soul and Reason**

What would Nature say if we asked it why it Generates and Produces? If Nature cared listen or speak, it might say, "Instead of asking questions, you should be quiet and learn by observing. I am silent myself

and am not predisposed to speech. What you need to understand is that what I visualize comes to Be. This is an Act of Contemplation, is silent, and is a part of my Essence. Because I am a product of Contemplation, I am fond towards all Contemplative things. My Contemplation creates Objects of Contemplation. Geometers must draw the shapes that they dream up. Yet I do not need to draw anything. The Objects of my Contemplation come into Existence by my mere thought, as though they fall out of me. I am like my Mother (i.e. the Soul of All) and those who begot me (i.e. the Reasons and Ideal Forms which Nature derives from). We are all products of Contemplation. My birth was not an Act, but is a manifestation of their very Being. They are the Seminal Reasons. They Contemplate themselves, and then I am born of them."

What does this mean? It tells us that Nature is a Soul. It is produced by the most ontologically antecedent and powerful Souls. Retaining their character, it remains in static Contemplation. Its Contemplation is not directed (e.g. above or below), but remains self-contained and stable within its very Being. The Contemplation of everything present to it without any effort produces a sort of self-awareness. Understanding everything within its sphere, it is satisfied with the Beauty of such complete comprehension.

Now we must be careful when applying terms like perception and comprehension to Nature. When applied to Nature, these terms have a different meaning than when we think of our own experiences of them. They are as different as the perceptions and experiences of someone who is asleep and someone who is awake.

Nature's perceptions and comprehensions occur without any Act on its own part. They are a silent part of its immutable Being, and it knows them effortlessly in this way. Nature is itself a silent part of the sphere of immutable Beings. Yet the perception and comprehension of Nature is diminished, ontologically removed from the source (i.e. Nous). A diminished Contemplation in turn produces something even more diminished. Thus, all of Nature's creations are weak.

It is the same for Human Beings who are weak in their Contemplative abilities. They eschew Contemplation for Action, which is like a shadow of Contemplation. Their Souls are weak, and their faculty of Contemplation is inadequate to attain the Intellectual Principles they are drawn towards. Thus, they Act to try and obtain what they could not get to by Contemplation. Put another way, Act is itself a product of weakness. Every Act is a diminished consequence of a Contemplation. Weak people only see the consequences or thing produced as a result of Action, as that is all they can grasp with their own eyes. Only someone unintelligent would choose a diminished copy of something when they could possess the thing itself. This is why less intelligent children are drawn to manual labor and physical crafting as opposed to the study of abstract subjects.

### **3.8.5 Soul and Contemplation**

Our discussion of Nature has brought us through the process of Generation as a Contemplation. We will now take a step back in the chain to the Soul which is antecedent to Nature. This Soul's Contemplative Acts, affinity for learning, and the productive character of its complete knowledge produce something new. Thus, from the Contemplation of higher Soul, Nature (also a Contemplation) is generated. It is the same process as how an aspiring student can possess an accurate but limited understanding of a technical subject through incomplete study of it. The subject itself has produced an incomplete image of itself in the mind of the student. The pieces of this subject as understood by the student are not self-reinforcing, and require reference to something outside of the student (like a text book) which is stable and serves as the source of the information.

The most Primal phase of Soul dwells within Divine Intellect. Ever connected to Divine Intellect, the highest phase of soul remains there. Soul's next phase (i.e. the generative phase) becomes the first participant in the Real Beings of Divine Intellect which it receives through the higher phase of Soul. Thus, Life flows into Lives, and is absent nowhere. As Soul proceeds through its branches, it allows each fulfilled Life to remain where it is, creating an unending chain from the lowest phase of Soul through to the highest. If Soul did not leave such a trail behind, it would lose its link to Intellect. Further, the phases of Soul beneath Intellect are also weak and lack self-sufficient. They require the Activity of the higher phases of Soul to be present everywhere.

In summary, Soul's activity must be everywhere, and its presence must be different as it moves through its procession. Its Acts must be the result of a Contemplation or prior Act, and because there is no Act antecedent to Contemplation, all Acts are varieties of Contemplation. Each Act of Contemplation thus produces diminished Acts of Contemplation weaker than the one which produced them. After all, you can only produce something of the same substance as the source of the produced thing. Contemplation can only produce further Contemplations, although the younger Contemplations will be attenuated due to their lower rank and distance from the source. In this way, Soul produces all things within itself and without external influence. The original Self-Contemplation requires no external objects of Contemplation. The Soul of All contemplates itself, which produces Nature. Nature in turn generates all things via further Contemplation. Contemplation thus gives birth to Contemplation.

There is no limit to Contemplation. This is how Soul can be everywhere universally. After all, all Souls contain Contemplation. Contemplation has no requirement of physical displacement. Yet Contemplation is not the same in all places. Consequently, Contemplation is different in strength and character at all places in the universe, and even within each phase of Soul. This is what Plato means when he says the charioteer communicates the information he has to his both of his horses (See Plato's Phaedrus, 247D). The charioteer is the highest, leading phase of Soul. Each horse represents a lower phase of Soul. The horses are seen to desire the knowledge the charioteer has, but they cannot receive it directly from Intellect and so much receive it transitively from him. In their Acts, the horses strive for the objects of Contemplation unavailable to them.

### **3.8.6 We Act to Contemplate The Good**

The goal of Act is Contemplation and the objects of Contemplation. This is the case for all people who Act. They only Act because they are unable to reach what they seek directly. This is even true when we speak of desiring objects. We do not merely desire the object, but we desire to experience it such that we may come to know it in our Soul. We desire for our Soul to Contemplate it. Every Act is carried out in pursuit of some goal, or Good. We do not merely want this Good to be external to us, we want to possess it internally. This is the goal of every Act.

Where is this internal location in which we desire to possess a Good? It is within the Soul. Act thus comes from Contemplation (i.e. a Reason), and produces a Contemplation (i.e. an understanding of the result within the Soul). What else could reach the Soul, itself a Reason, but another Reason? The less Soul needs to Act to obtain Contemplative knowledge of the object of its desire, the stronger the impression that is made. Once the object of its desire has been achieved, Soul is satisfied and ceases its Acts. Such knowledge is known in silent confidence, intuitively and internally. As confidence in this knowledge grows, the Contemplation becomes still. The knowledge becomes Unified with the knower.

Now we must be serious. The knower and what is known must share an identity (see Notes on Plotinus, Ennead One, First Tractate). If they are separate from one another, then they cannot be said to have been reconciled (i.e. understood) by Soul. They will be distinct like Ideas that a Soul possesses, but which are not presently Contemplated. Thus, the student must incorporate within themselves the knowledge which they seek such that they are Unified. Only then have they truly learned. This knowledge, when learned and then Contemplated by Soul, manifests as Reason for productive Act. In this process, Soul segments this piece of knowledge and Contemplates it, thus once again making it distinct and something external to Soul. Put another way, Soul must identify a particular set of knowledge in order to perceive it. This is due to the limitations of Soul, which lacks the Unified Fullness of Nous (i.e. Divine Intellect). None the less, the segmentation of knowledge for the sake of Contemplation does nothing to diminish Soul. It does not ultimately remove anything from Soul. After all, Soul must contain that which it Contemplates in some way before it can Contemplate it at all. Soul's ultimate function is to view things individually.

People who are engaged in Acts attempt to obtain some Good within Nature and the world around them. Knowledge of this Good, when it is already known to Soul, is known with more confidence and less subject to distractions and flux. Pure Soul is certainly closer to the fullness of Nous than is Nature. Pure Soul's closer proximity to Nous coupled with its relative lack knowledge when compared with Nous produces the desire in Soul for Contemplation. It seeks to investigate and know of things. Soul leaves its self-contained highest sphere and examines the objects of Nature. The Wiser the Soul, the more knowledge it has, the less need of descent it has, and the more internally focused it becomes.

The Wise Sage harmonizes their mind with Reason. They only express to others things they have obtained for themselves already. They self-reflect, and come to know the Unity of both the external world, but also of themselves. Their goal is to rest within the Unity of themselves, content that all things are within them.

### **3.8.7 Generating the Objects of Contemplation**

Everything is truly a Contemplation. This is true of the primary Real Beings as well as for the secondary Beings that they Contemplate into existence. All secondary Beings are objects of Contemplation, whether they derive from a sense perception or prior knowledge. Even Acts and Desires ultimately strive towards knowledge.

Every Contemplation generates objects of Contemplation, which are Ideal Forms. Each Ideal Form in turn generates additional Ideal Forms. As a rule, the Ideal Form which gets produced is a reflection of the Ideal Form which generated it. This process shows that the Real Beings do not seek Acts, but rather use Acts to generate additional objects of Contemplation for them to think about. After all, both Acts of discursive Reason and Acts of sensory perception are aimed at gaining additional information. Underpinning discursive Reason and sense perceptions is Nature itself. Nature expresses the seminal Reason which in turn produces many additional Reasons and objects for Contemplation. These truths are either self-evident or demonstratable using logic.

Since the Real Beings are Intellectual in nature, it follows that everything would seek Intellect and Contemplation. As the origin of all things, the Intellectual Principles also determine the end goal of all things. When animals (i.e. Animated Bodies) reproduce, it always begins with the stirring of Reason within them. Procreation is really the expression of an Intellectual Principle. It is part of the pain and labor which goes into the generation of Ideal Forms, or objects of Contemplation. Procreation is a mechanism within the process of Reasons creating infinitely more Reasons as the universe Actualizes

the endless Potentialities. The generation of each new thing entails the generation of a new Ideal Form, which serves to enrich the content of the universe itself.

Since all generated things are objects of Contemplation, it also follows that all errors and faults in generated things are a product of errors or faults in Contemplation. Those without skill in Contemplation generate flawed things, just as unskilled artisans produce faulty products. Love is also a Contemplation in pursuit of new objects of Contemplation.

### **3.8.8 All Life is Contemplation**

Contemplation is elevated by degrees. It rises from Nature, through Soul, and arrives at Intellect. As Contemplation is elevated through these phases, it becomes increasing self-contained, intuitive, and United with the Contemplator. In Soul fully Ascended, the Knower and the Knowledge begin to converge as each strives towards Intellect. In Divine Intellect itself, both the Contemplator and the Object of Contemplated are ultimately Unified. For the Wisest of Souls, the objects of Contemplation are appropriated but remain separate. In Intellect, no such appropriation is possible. For the Real Beings of Intellect, their Being (i.e. Essence) and Contemplation are identical. Subject and Object Unite into a single Contemplative Life, and their differences are dissolved.

A living Contemplation differs from an Object of Contemplation. Objects of Contemplation may reside within the mind of some living thing, but this does not imply that they have coalesced. For them to truly Unify, the Contemplation's Life must also serve as the Object of Contemplation. This is in stark contrast to the lives of plants or the sensations of Animated (i.e. Ensouled) Beings. Plants and animals are distinct from the objects of their Contemplation, implying a division between the two.

The Lives of plants and animals are all Contemplations, though these Contemplations are qualified through the Life which is engaging in said Contemplation. The Contemplative experience of plants is that of vegetative growth. The Contemplative experience of most animals are those of sensory perceptions. Yet all of them are Contemplations, as they are each Reasons (i.e. Expressions of Intellectual Principles). Each Life is a Contemplation, just on a varied scale of completeness. The clarity of the Contemplation is proportional to its Completeness (and thus its ontological rank). Thus, the first Life must be the clearest and fullest Contemplation, where the Subject and Object of contemplation are Unified. Put another way, the first Life is Intellect itself. All Lives stem from this first Life, such that each is an increasingly small fraction of intellect. Yet this means that all Lives are Intellectual, as they are all of the same Intellectual substance.

Foolish Humans see the continuum of Life, but not the continuum of Intellect. They will argue that some of the experiences (such as those of certain animals) consist in Intellect, but they will deny it to others (e.g. plants). This mistake stems from a lack of understanding of what Life and Intellect really are. As we have shown once again, everything Exists as a product of Contemplation. If the truest Life is a Life which Contemplates, and if the truest form of Contemplation is one in the same as the truest Life, then it follows that the truest Contemplation is itself Alive.

If Intellect is truly Unified, how can there be multiplicity within it? It is because pure Unity is transcendent to experience. Pure undifferentiated Unity, a complete dissolution of distinctions, would not be Intellect itself. Undifferentiated Unity is The One itself. Even when an Intellect Contemplates The One, it does so from its particular perspective. Intellect is the fall of this transcendent Unity. Without Act or Effort, Multiplicity unfolds from Unity out of a desire for possession of All Things. This unfortunate circumstance results in the descent from the first ontological rank. This descent mirrors the drawing of a

circle. No longer just an Ideal circle, it must be broken down into its center, radii, circumference, and surface area in order for it to be drawn. Thus, the Ideal sources are always superior to their manifestations. The result has lost something in comparison to its origin (i.e. its Principle source in Intellect). The sum of something's parts can never match its undifferentiated Unity in Ideal Form.

Divine Intellect (i.e. Nous, Intellect itself) is not any particular Intellect (i.e. a mind capable of Intellectual thought). It is Intellect and all of its content as a whole. Because Nous encompasses all Intellect, it stands that it is also the Intellect of all things. Further, because it is the Intellect of all things, its parts must (together) contain all things at each ontological rank. Otherwise, there would be some component of it that was not Intellectual, and this would imply that Intellect is comprised of non-Intellects. We would be left with a purely emergent system that only possesses Intellect as a consequence of its constituent parts and their aggregation. Yet Intellect is infinite. The Beings which proceed from it take nothing from it as they proceed, and lose nothing of themselves. After all, it encompasses all things. How could Everything be diminished? Ultimately, Intellect is transcended to the sum of its parts.

### **3.8.9 The Unity Which Transcends Multiplicity**

That is the Nature of Intellect. For these reasons, it does not sit at the first, most primordial ontological rank. There must be something (i.e. The One) Beyond Intellect, Beyond Being. Our previous arguments lend credence to this as well. Unity must precede Multiplicity. Intellect is Numerous (i.e. quantifiable in terms of Numbers), and the Principle of all Numbers is One (i.e. Unity). Intellect is simultaneously Intellective (i.e. the ability of Intellectual thought) and Intelligible (i.e. the object of Intellectual thought). Thus, it is always a Duality (i.e. Two).

What could precede Duality? Is it just one part of the Duality of Intellect (i.e. either Intellective ability or Intelligible content)? This cannot be so. Everything Intelligible is tied to an Intellect in which to Contemplate it. Thus, in turn, every Intellect is tied to Intelligible objects to Contemplate. Therefore, that which transcends Intellect must also transcend this contingent Duality. It must be the source of both the Intellective and Intelligible. What could be the source of both the Intellective and Intelligible? This source necessarily must either possess Intellectual abilities (i.e. be Intellective) or not. Now, if it does think, then it will participate in Intellect in some way. If it does not, it will be ignorant of all things including itself. Ignorance of all things hardly seems venerable.

If we hold that what precedes Intellect is The Good, comprised simply of One thing (i.e. it is simplex), we would be accurate. Yet there is little clarity that we can ascertain from such a statement. We require firm, distinct concepts for our Contemplations and conversations. Here in lies our problem. We come to know things in terms of their distinct Essences within Intellect. All of our knowledge derives from Intellect. How then can we know of something which is antecedent and transcendent to Intellect itself? How can we think and speak about it if it precedes the framework for thought and conversation? We must admit this as a Human limitation. Yet we participate in this transcendent Unity (i.e. The One) as well. Since we share in the Unity of The One, but since it is transcendent to Intellectual sphere by which we come to know things, we are limited to understanding it intuitively via our experience as a part of it.

In fact, there is nowhere that Unity is not present. All things which participate in the Unity of The One are imbued with its presence. Its omnipresence ensures that whatever part of you that can participate in its Good receives its Goodness directly from the source. It is like a voice in an empty room. At every place in the room, the voice can be heard. Yet from no place in the room can the voice be heard from every perspective.

How do we direct our Intellect to The Good? The Intellect within us must return to its source, although in general it looks both backwards to its source and forwards to its products. If Intellect can submit itself to the superior powers antecedent to it, it can take part in something beyond its innate capabilities, thus rising beyond its own Essence. After all, Intellect is the first Life. Its Act is to produce all things in a cascading emanation, although within Intellect itself this Act is simultaneous, without effort, and induces no conflict. Since Intellect emanates Life, and since it possesses all things in terms of their unique Essences as distinct Beings (to merely possess them without distinction would be inarticulate and contrary to Intellect itself), it must derive from some antecedent primordial Being. This must be a Principle which does not participate in Emanation, but is the Principle of Emanation, Life, Intellect, and the universe itself.

Not all things are Principles, but all things derive from a Principle. This Principle is not simply all things in sum, or any subset of all things. In order for it to be the Principle of All things, it must not contain any Multiplicity. It must be the source of Multiplicity itself. The Principle which produces something else is always simpler than that which it produces. Thus, the source of Intellect must be simpler than Intellect itself.

If we take The One to encompass all things, then it must do so one of two ways. One option is that it is both All things, but each thing is also its own individual. Alternatively, it has been called All things at Once. Yet if it is All things at Once, then The One would be contingent upon the All and thus it will be posterior to the All. If it is antecedent to the All, then it must be distinct from the All. It might be argued that The One is co-Existent with the All, but then The One could not be the Principle of everything. Something must be antecedent to something else in order to be its Principle. If The One is the Principle of All things, then it must be antecedent to All things. If it is argued that the One is All things as individuals, then each individual would be subsumed by it as a singular thing, and each thing could rightly be called The One. Thus, any discernment would be impossible. In short, The One is neither All things in One, nor each thing individually.

### **3.8.10 The Foundational Simplicity of Unity**

What is this Principle which is the Source of Intellect? It is the Potentiality of All Being, the productive Source of all things. Without it, nothing would exist. Not even Intellect, the primary Source of Life. So, The One is the Potentiality of All things, whereas Nous (Intellect) is the Actualization of all things. Thus, Nous is like water flowing from The One as if it were a spring.

If we are to describe The One as a spring, we must note that this spring would have to be its own Source. It would flow out into the various streams and rivers which stem from it, yet the spring itself would never run dry or even lose any of its water. As the source of all of the rivers and streams, all of their water is Unified prior to pouring out from the spring. Yet even so, their paths are determined prior to their departure, and each stream can anticipate its path beyond. Alternatively, we can compare it to a great tree. It stems from its root, but it continues throughout its many branches. Thus, it remains a singular Unity while branching off into Multiplicity. Even though it has many branches, every limb within the tree can trace itself back to the same source.

That Multiplicity springs fourth from Unity should not surprise us. Without One there cannot be Many. Unity is not distributed or divided among the Multiple. Without the Whole, there can be no Parts. Thus, the destruction of the Whole would mean the destruction of the Parts. Everything which is contingent upon the Source would cease to Be if the Source did not remain itself and continue to serve as Principle.



For this reason, everything distinct within Multiplicity has ties back to the Source. Thus, everything has an ascending return path to The One. Everything ultimately is a part of the transcendent Unity of all things. Every complexity can be reduced to the ultimate simplicity. First, we can reduce it to its participation in the multiplicity of distinct Beings (i.e. Nous, or Intellect). While this is already a simplification, we have not yet arrived at absolute simplicity. Such a simplicity must be completely irreducible. Only this irreducible simplicity and Unity can be The One.

Thus, if we consider the irreducible source of a tree, an animal, a Soul, or the Universe itself, we will find that which is most venerable and powerful in all things. If we consider this simple, Unified, transcendent whole from which everything is derived, can we possibly even doubt its Reality? Certainly, this Principle is none of the things which emanate from it. Since it is ultimately simple, it cannot be derived from anything simpler. It cannot be predicated on Essence, Being, or Life. After all, each of these are posterior and predicated on it! If you could abstract an experience of it from all of the Beings which participate in it, you will arrive at ecstasy. To focus on it, reach it, and to remain present to it is to experience its simple Unity intuitively. To experience its greatness in of itself is to experience its greatness throughout all of its emanations.

### **3.8.11 The Self Sufficient Good**

We can arrive at The One another way as well. Intellect is an intuitive Experience. Since it is an Experience, it must consist in two phases. Namely, there is the Potential for this Experience, and the Actualization of this Experience. These components mirror the roles of Form and Matter. Even the Actualization of an Experience implies a sort of duality. There is the thing which is Experienced, and the thing which Experiences. So, from the Unity that is the Potential for an Experience, we diverge into the Multiplicity (i.e. the Two of the Experiencer and the Experienced). With the Actualization of the Experience, Experiencer and Experienced are Unified once again.

In the Sensible World, our Experiences are apprehended via the senses. The Actualization of a sensory Experience leads to a Contemplation within Intellect. The Actualization of Intellect, then, must ascend backwards towards The One itself. Put another way, Intellect seeks to Experience its Good. Intellect cannot be the Good itself. If it were, what need would it have for Actualization or Experience? After all, the Acts of All things are always in search of The Good. The Good itself has no need for change, Experience, Act or anything else. It is self-satisfied. Thus, when we speak of The Good, we must be careful to imply nothing in addition. Any addition would be a loss.

Because it needs of nothing, we cannot even ascribe Intellect to the primal Good. To ascribe Intellect to the Good is to introduce Multiplicity to the detriment of the Unity. Intellect needs The Good, not the other way around. Any Good which Intellect experiences is solely due to it becoming more like The Good itself. The Archetype which Intellect strives to fulfil (i.e. The Good, The One) can be indirectly discerned via the traces of itself which manifest in Intellect. To achieve its Good, Intellect takes on Form. Intellect derives from The Good in that it uses its Experience of The Good to Form the Real Beings within itself. As Intellect Eternally Experiences The Good, it forever achieves its Good of emanating Real Beings in its image. The Good itself does not aspire to anything. What could it lack? Would more could it possibly do? Thus, conclusively Intellect is not The Good.

While not The Good itself, Intellect is certainly Beautiful. In fact, it is the most Beautiful thing. It sits in perfect presence of The Good's light and produces perfect Real Beings of which all Sensible objects are imperfect variants. The sphere of Intellect is perfectly clear, all distinctions are perfectly definite, and it contains only splendor within itself. The Human Being who trains themselves to behold Intellect

becomes enlightened if they can harmonize themselves with it. For it is impossible to look at the Heavenly Bodies without wondering about their source. So too is it impossible to Experience the Real Beings of Intellect without wondering about their source. What could birth a child as Beautiful and Full as Intellect itself?

The Good cannot be Intellect nor Fullness. It is antecedent to both. Both Intellect and Fullness have their Good (i.e. being Filled and Contemplation). They are close to perfection, as Fullness and Intellect possess everything primally and completely. Yet what comes before them has no need for possession of anything at all. That which has no need for anything external can only be The Good itself.